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EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is noteworthy that, of four orations (including the president's address) delivered at a recent meeting of the A. M. A., three had more or less to do with, or else directly accented, a particular desideratum—the education of the public in matters pertaining to public health and the work of the physician in securing sanitary improvements. Dr. Burrell, the president, gives as the title of his address, "A New Duty of the Medical Profession; The Education of the Public in Scientific Medicine." Dr. Harrington, in the oration on State Medicine, discusses in a masterly manner the movement to secure a Department of Public Health, justly arguing that such should be developed from the present Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, but pointing out most clearly that to obtain a body competent to deal with national problems of sanitation, quarantine, etc., a constitutional amendment will be required; to secure this, the public must be educated to see its necessity. Dr. Thayer, in the oration on Medicine, the title of which is "Some Relations of the Physician to the Public," discusses the same question. Is all this without significance? About four years ago Dr. McCormack, in his talks to

county medical societies all over the country, urged the dropping of the foolish robe of secrecy with which our profession had clothed itself, and the open and frank discussion of our work and our problems with the lay public. For at least three years, your JOURNAL has, in season and out, preached the same thing, urged upon county societies that they hold meetings with the public and with various classes of citizens at which meetings matters of common interest should be discussed. We have all seen the absurd opposition, originating in ignorance or misunderstanding, to public health legislation and to the enforcement of measures intended for the protection of the public, which we as physicians have urged. Now, shall we be in the front rank of the procession, or shall we drag along toward the rear? In the matter of reorganization, California was one of the first states to adopt our present plan, founding the whole structure of medical organization on the county society unit. Shall we again be among the first to take up this matter of public education at home, and see to it that all over our state the people are taught the nature of our efforts in their behalf and their criminal apathy? Tuberculosis kills more people in this country every five years than died in the whole course of the civil war; and tuberculosis is a preventable disease. Typhoid fever costs the community millions of dollars each year; and typhoid fever is a filth disease. Should not every citizen of our state know that if he gets typhoid fever it is because he has eaten or drunk somewhat from the urine or the feces of some other person? And that he has done so because of criminal carelessness? This movement is surely coming; shall we lead it or be driven by it?

For most of the years of its life, this JOURNAL has been one of those to raise its voice in the demand that more physicians take an active interest in the political control and government of our states and of our nation. Practically all law making has been done since the United States began as such, by lawyers. As a result, we have more laws than we know what to do with and our courts are, almost without exception, devoted to the matter of finding new technicalities in and conflicts between these numerous laws. The people have suffered. Public health legislation has been ignored. The voice of the scientific minister to the health and welfare of the people has not been heard, as it should have been, in our legislative halls. Again is this matter forced upon our attention, and this time from an entirely new source. Mr. Gillett, the Governor of California, under date of June 15th, has written the letter which follows to the Councillor for the 8th District, Dr. Parkinson. The letter is most significant, and, with the consent of the Governor and of Dr. Parkinson, we very gladly present it to you herewith for your careful consideration. Is it not timely? Is it not sound common-sense? Should not medical men take their place in our legislatures to the end that the

public good and the public health be more adequately served? It is a sacrifice, of course. A sacrifice of time and energy, to go to the legislature and "stand for" all that there happens; but is it not our duty, and are we not neglecting our plain duty to the people when we ignore this governmental function which is ours, not alone as citizens, but as members of a profession that has for its charge, the public health? It would seem so. It is true that a few distinguished physicians have, in the past, devoted a portion of their time and their energies to this duty. But there should be more such and the influence of our profession should be felt in the houses of our legislature, not spasmodically, but increasingly with each passing year. It is not a right we should claim, but a duty we should perform. Shall we perform it?

"As the time for nominating Senators and Assemblymen throughout the state is fast approaching, there is one thing that I would like to call to your attention that I trust will be presented to the medical society. I think it is important that there should be at least two physicians in the Legislature, either in the Senate or Assembly, or both, to look after matters pertaining to the practice of Medicine in this state, that may come up before the Legislature for consideration. One can't tell just exactly what bills will be presented or how meritorious they may be. I would like to have somebody who is connected with the Senate or Assembly to consult with concerning legislation of this character, and would therefore like to see several members of your profession elected. I think it is very important that the medical profession should take an active interest in these matters, and believing that you entertain the same belief I call the matter to your attention so that some effort may be made, if the doctors of the state think necessary, to secure such representation."

The Supreme Court, in Bank, under date of June 15th, 1908, has recorded another decision anent the law regulating the practice of medicine, etc., in the State of California.

ANOTHER DECISION.

Technically, it is the case *ex parte* C. D. Greenhall, on habeas corpus; Crim. No. 1441. Greenhall, holding himself out to be a "chiropractic," and so practicing whatever that peculiar art may be, in Los Angeles, was arrested because he did not have a license so to practice. Unfortunately, the complaint upon which he was arrested was loosely drawn and alleged that he did unlawfully treat the sick or afflicted by a system or mode known as the "chiropractic;" it did not allege that he practiced or held himself out as practicing such a system of treating the sick or afflicted. On this technicality the court spent most of its energies; the point is a minor one, though it will be valuable to remember. The court seemed to take the attitude that the loose wording of the complaint would apply to one who "incidentally and gratui-

tously suggests or puts into operation some method of treatment in the case of one who is 'sick or afflicted,' " in contra-distinction to one who practices such a method as a means of livelihood. Thus any one who tendered his services or who actually came to the relief of some injured, sick or afflicted person in an emergency, for instance, if he did not possess a license from the Board of Medical Examiners so to do, might be held liable under a complaint such as this one. The point is well taken and a chance for some further legal absurdity is in consequence avoided. But all this is merely incidental; doubtless if a proper complaint is drawn and Greenhall is again arrested, he will be convicted without redress. The valuable portion of the decision in question is contained in the closing paragraph. It must be remembered, by the way, that in the plaintiff's brief on appeal it was claimed that the law regulating the practice of medicine was unconstitutional. On this point the learned justices of the Supreme Court have the following to say:

"In view of our decisions on the general subject, and the later decisions generally of courts of other states, we are not particularly impressed by the argument made in support of the contention that the legislative act of 1907 is unconstitutional. Because of our conclusion upon the question of the sufficiency of the complaint, it will not, however, be necessary to consider this contention."

It would appear from this that the long years of uncertainty (on the part of those who wish to be uncertain) are over and that it may from now be taken as an assured fact that the law is constitutional and will be so held in every essential particular by the court of last resort in our state. This is indeed good news and we may with good reason rejoice; the holding or dismissal of Greenhall is a small matter in comparison with the opinion as to the constitutionality of the law. This will be a sad blow to the small but compact circle of "sore heads" and their diploma mill friends; but that also is cause for rejoicing.

Quite a little has appeared during the past few months concerning the ophthalmo-tuberculin reaction. It is pretty generally understood by this time and is based upon the principle that a small quantity of tuberculin dropped

OPHTHALMO REACTION.

into the conjunctival sac of a person having tuberculosis will set up a supposedly mild conjunctivitis, and it is assumed that the reaction thus caused is both harmless and at the same time pathognomonic of the disease. Neither of these assumptions is absolutely correct. There are now recorded a not inconsiderable number of instances in which the reaction set up was far from mild, causing, in some cases, dangerous inflammation with tissue destruction. And, furthermore, the reaction is not pathognomonic. For instance, if the tuberculin is dropped into the eye of a perfectly healthy person, no